Cell services by M/s Bharti

2366. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether M/s Bharti proposes to launch cell services in three new circles; if so, the details thereof and the type of cell services proposed to be launched;

(b) the overall investment of the company in cell services with areas of coverage;

(c) the fresh areas proposed to be covered in the next phase; and

(d) whether the company propose to offer any kind of incentives to the customers to woo them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) to (c) Sir, as a result of tenders invited during the year 2001 for grant of licences for Cellular Mobile Telephone Service (CMTS); M/s Bharti Cellular Limited were granted licences for CMTS operation in 1800 MHz Band for 8 new Service Areas in September, 2001. As per the information furnished by M/s Bharti Cellular Limited, it has started CMTS in 7 out of these 8 new Service Areas namely Mumbai, Gujarat, Haryana, Kerala, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, UP-West and is likely to launch service in due course in the only remaining Gujarat Telecom Circle Service Area.

As per the terms and conditions of the CMTS Licence, an operator is required to cover 10% of District Headquarters within one year and 50% of District Headquarters within three years. The Licensee is also permitted to cover any other town in a district in lieu of the District Headquarter. The choice of District Headquarters / towns to be covered and further expansion beyond 50% District Headquarters/towns shall lie with the Licensee depending on their business decision.

Government does not exercise control with regard to the choice of cities / areas to be covered with the service by a private company and also does not keep record of the investment made by a private company.

(d) Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) is responsible for

fixation of tariffs for Telecom Services including CMTS. As per information furnished by TRAI, Cellular Service Providers are allowed to offer different tariff packages with its approval. The subscribers are at liberty to choose any of the tariff packages on offer as per their requirement / usage pattern.

Provision of village telephones by BSNL and DoT

2367. SHRI RAJU PARMAR:
SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) what has been the precentage of village telephones provided by the public sector BSNL and DoT during the last three years and what is the percentage of telephones installed as against the number of DELs installed from 1998 to 2001;

(b) whether it is a fact that Attorney General of India has opined before migration to the National Telecom Policy, 1999, that two sets of licensing regimes were legally not tenable to the growth of telecom; and

(c) whether Government have accepted this recommendation or continuing with two sets of licenses in the telecom sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) BSNL and erstwhile DoT were providing telephones in urban areas as well as rural areas in the villages during last three years. Total DELs installed is 14.91 million and 17.76 per cent of this DELs are Village Telephones (Rural Area Telephones). Total Village Public Telephones (VPT) provided during last three year is 1,29,057 and this is 44.52% of the target fixed for VPTs during last three years.

(b) and (c) Opinion of the Attorney General was sought by the Government in the context of Government's intention expressed in New Telecom Policy-1999 (NTP-99) to "satisfactorily resolve the problems being faced by the existing operators in a manner which is consistent with the contractual obligations and is legally tenable" (Para 3.11 of NTP-99). The existing operators were facing problems due to high licence fees committed in the bids submitted by them for obtaining the licences. In his opinion the Attorney General had, *inter-alia*, expressed that "continuance of existing